

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2023

The Honorable Robert L. Santos
Director, U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Rd,
Hillcrest Heights, Maryland 20746

Dear Director Santos:

As the United States Census Bureau considers changes to the upcoming Census survey as well as related best practices and policies surrounding data collection, we write with specific recommendations to ensure people experiencing homelessness are accurately counted in the 2030 Decennial Census.

Census statistics are crucial to programs and service providers that support people experiencing homelessness. While data from Point-in-Time Counts required biannually by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – such as the annual count implemented by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority – track homelessness at the local level, the upcoming Census survey will determine critical distribution of funding from federal assistance housing programs.

As Members representing LA County and the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC), the [largest](#) urban county in the nation at 4,083 square miles and the Continuum of Care with [the largest number of people experiencing homelessness](#), we recognize the in-depth logistical planning that goes into conducting an accurate count of people experiencing homelessness in the decennial Census survey. We appreciate the Census Bureau's efforts in 2020 to provide an accurate count of people experiencing homelessness in the United States and implore your office to take additional steps to further improve the accuracy of the count in the upcoming 2030 survey.

In order to effectively reach people experiencing homelessness and count them in the 2030 Decennial Census, we request that the Census Bureau, under your leadership, take the following steps:

1. Account for regional differences that may factor into how and where people experience homelessness and develop tangible strategies for outreach methods to various housing/shelter typologies during the count. This may include developing steering committees or workgroups to increase planning communications between cities that have certain similar characteristics.
2. Provide tablets and other portable technologies to outreach workers in areas that are densely populated with people experiencing homelessness to complete surveys quickly and in real time while ensuring individuals are counted accurately.
3. Utilize enumerated data from the biannual (or annual in the case of some CoCs, including the LA CoC) Point-in-Time Count required by HUD. The Census Bureau should consult with HUD to establish clear guidance around data sharing.

4. Utilize as many different approaches as possible to gather data from people experiencing homelessness, rather than a “one size fits all” approach, which does not result in accurate counts of people experiencing homelessness. Various approaches may include kiosks and pop-up tents at shelters and access centers, paper forms, online forms, outreach workers, and visual counts.
5. Design and implement an expansive Language Access Plan for the Census survey, including contracting translation service providers.
6. Train Census workers conducting surveys in trauma informed engagement, especially if they are surveying people experiencing homelessness. To the extent possible, the Census Bureau should utilize individuals who already engage in direct service work with people experiencing homelessness or lived experience advocates to conduct outreach and the Census survey.

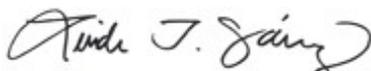
We urge the Census Bureau to implement the above recommendations in preparation for the upcoming 2030 Census and stand ready to connect officials with members of the local community in our districts to assist in doing so. **Furthermore, we respectfully request a response from the Census Bureau outlining the steps you plan to take to implement each of the above recommendations and additional changes you are considering to ensure people experiencing homelessness are accurately counted. If the Census Bureau is unable to implement one or more of the above recommendations, we request a detailed explanation of the barriers that inhibit implementation.**

Thank you for your careful consideration of these recommendations, which are critical to ensuring that all individuals, unhoused or not, are counted in the Census survey. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



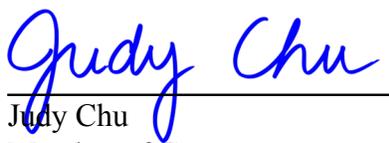
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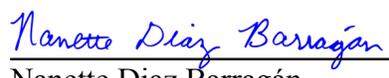

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